Draft Report on a visit to Afghanistan by
R. Sanderud, UNESCO Adviser to UNICEF and
P.C. Pooran, ILO Adviser to UNICEF

19-23 June 1977

This joint visit was made on the way back from the UNICEF Executive Board meeting in Manila.

Objectives:

The principal purpose was to look into the possibilities of identifying targets for assistance within UNICEF's present policies. In particular it was proposed to discuss with officials of the Ministry of Education and the Rural Development Department Government's proposals for curriculum reforms and vocational education.

Mr. Sanderud was expected to focus on teacher training, formal education, education programmes for women and girls, with emphasis on health, employment opportunities and the enhancement of women's status in the community.

Mr. Pooran was expected to consider those questions related to transfer of skills, vocational education, the development of village technology, the maintenance of pumps for rural water supply and the possibility of UNICEF's involvement in the proposed ILO Comprehensive Employment Mission.

Officials met and institutions visited:

The following officials were met in the order shown:

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Teacher Training Institute:

Dr. G. Kay (UNESCO), Chief Technical Adviser, Teacher Training Project.

Mr. W. Liversidge (UNESCO), Teacher Training Adviser.

CARE - Medico:

Dr. F.T. Davis, Director, CARE, Afghanistan

Mrs. Shah )
) Project Staff
Mrs. Ward )

Audio Visual Institute:

Dr. A.K. Kondo (UNESCO), Senior Expert, Science Education

Mr. N.K. Lowe (UNESCO), Adviser on local production of science equipment

National Directorate of Adult Education and Functional Literacy:

Mr. M.H. Rahimi, President, National Directorate of Adult Education and Functional Literacy

Mrs. S. Doraiswamy, Adult Education and Reading Materials Production Expert Family Health and Adult Education Project UNESCO

Handicraft Promotion Centre - Paktya: (Visited by Mr. Pooran)

Mr. Naik Mohamed Jalal, Director

Mr. S. Mustapha

Ministry of Education:

Mr. T. Porjosh, President, Educational Planning Department

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Rural Development Department:

Engineer M.M. Seddik, President

Mr. G. Gleister, UNOTC Adviser

Mr. T. Coles )
) (Details from Mr. Piracha)
Dr. Jain )

Department of Curriculum Development:

(To be supplied) (Mr. Sanderud)

Conclusions:

This short visit did not give us sufficient time to go deeply enough into the problems found. Nevertheless information has been gathered from which the general dimensions of the problems can be gauged, and upon which the next steps could be planned.

It was not anticipated that the lack of cooperation and co-ordination amongst Government departments could be as serious as found. For example there is a fairly obvious lack of co-ordination and co-operation between the Curriculum Department, Teacher Education and Teaching materials production. The present in-service teacher training programme should naturally be based upon the "new" primary school curriculum which has been produced by the Ministry of Education with support from the "Columbia" team of USAID.[1] Yet, under present arrangments, teacher education has been moved to higher education, and therefore falls outside the jurisdiction of the Planning Section of the M.O.E., which is responsible for co-ordination.

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1) Incidentally the long-time span - 13 years - to produce the curriculum and text books, and the more recently proposals to change the education cycle may render some of the prepared material obsolete.

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There is a similar need for co-ordination of the plans of the Departments of Rural Education, Adult Education (Literacy), the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and other Ministries and Departments which may be engaged in rural development. For example, the intention to introduce more skills in the formal system in Grade VII and VIII, will demand inputs from the employment and vocational training specialists.

Education and training can provide one of the most effective vehicles for rural development. The teacher can be deployed as the animateur in each village if he is provided with appropriately designed curriculae and the necessary technical supporting materials. The curriculum should be based on community needs. Teachers and trainers should obviously be conversant with curricula content ! The actual delivery may be formal or non-formal in the in-school or out-of-school situation and for all age groups.

A systematic design of curriculae, based upon the requirements of the individual and the community, should logically include the transfer of skills to stimulate the development of village technology, the capacity for the maintenance of equipment, and elements of employment generation and promotion; each aspect being dependent upon the age and needs of the target group.

The foregoing is supported by the CINAM study which was sponsored by the Government of Afghanistan and UNICEF (Kabul 1973).

In principle much of this has apparently been recognised since it is understood that health services benefitting children will be delivered through, and with the help of teachers - a sign of co-ordination

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between the Ministries of Health and Education which should be fostered.

The efforts to make the Department of Rural Development a central agency for coordination also appears to be a logical approach. The task will however be impossible if there is no greater co-ordination of efforts.

UNICEF may choose to strengthen its advocacy role in order to stimulate greater co-ordination, concurrently providing assistance to strengthen the national capacity to implement the curriculum reforms especially in the delivery of education and training.

UNICEF's inputs and actions should therefore be carefully calculated to stimulate co-ordination of the various sources of international support, as well as the national efforts. A practical example of the type of action envisaged is the CARE-MEDICO Rural Development Programme to which UNICEF is a partner.

As a first step a deeper study is required to examine the entire education and training situation in order to ascertain in more precise terms the role which can be played by UNICEF in the development of relevant curriculae,and the improvement and strengthening of the delivery system for education and training including staff development, with some attention to coordination at both national and international levels.

In education reforms, UNICEF has already stimulated and supported co-operation between UNESCO and ILO, the developments in East Africa and Burma being the most notable recent examples. A joint FAO/UNESCO/ILO

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Advisory Committee on Agricultural Education, Science and Training has also published a final report* which provides useful guidelines for inter-agency cooperation to meet the needs of rural development through education and training.

It has not been possible to study the new curriculum prepared with the assistance of USAID. From discussions and the CINAM report however, it is gathered that there may be a need for greater emphasis on practical training, especially the proposals to introduce a pre-vocational element in Grade VI and VII. It is our view that any such practical training should be closely linked to indigenous skills, crafts and materials. The delivery system also appears weak in the area of "practical training" or transfer of skills which should be strengthened.

It is therefore recommended that a study should be carried out by UNICEF to determine the roles and functions of existing facilities, and present and proposed training activities in order to pin-point more accurately those areas which should be supported, and the manner in which such training can be integrated into the educational system.

This study should include the development of coordination through a greater exchange of information between other activities such as the ITC/SIDA "Export Promotion" project. In this project there are proposals and possibilities of ILO collaboration with ITC/SIDA in the improvement of the quality of handicraft production and the organisation of production and services co-operatives. Other relevant proposals include the development or Rural Vocational Training with

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* FAO/UNESCO/ILO, Geneva, June 1977

the assistance of UNDP. These are all potential areas for stimulating income earning activities in the home.

In many respects the above study should carry a stage further the development of an education/training structure along the lines recommended by CINAM.

An assignment of this nature should be carried out by a training specialist in occupational skills over a period of 10-12 weeks.

Employment Policy Mission:

In response to a Government request, and in order to meet Government's priority of employment promotion in economic and social development under the seven-year development plan, it is proposed to field an Employment Policy Mission with the long-range objectives of a strategy for enhancing productive employment opportunities. The studies will include agricultural and rural employment, and educational and training policies as well as public administration and economic management.

The proposals envisage an examination of key areas of concern including rural development, reduction of under-employment, broadening employment opportunities for women, village technology, training needs, manpower requirements and the development of capabilities for continuing planning and monitoring,and indicators for education and training planning.

In the study of services for children within Regional Development Zones, carried out by CINAM (Compagnie d'etudes Industrielles et d'amenagement tu Territoire) and sponsored by the Ministry of Planning and UNICEF (Kabul 1973) it was suggested that there is a need to elaborate more "coherent" programmes in which the social economic and political aims are harmonised.

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More directly, the authors have stated that there is little utilisation of women for economic development. At the same time it was stated that "most important of all is that some action be taken to increase family income" in order to imrpve nutrition. Again on the question of improved housing, "there can be no solution unless there is also an increase of income."

The ILO employment mission no doubt envisages a cohesive approach, embracing areas which are of specific interest to UNICEF i.e. the studies on education and training, the enhancement of income earning activities for women, the likely improvement of the "absorptive capacity" in terms of planning and administration, and the overall improvement of the economic life and family well being.

The original proposals are at the moment being refined and being re-considered by the Government, following the technical report of an ILO Consultant (Mr. R.K. Srivastava) who visited Kabul from 4-9 June 77.

At the time of writing it is understood that UNDP may support the mission, the Afghanistan Government will bear internal costs and inputs will be made from ILO Regular resources. The estimate is being revised and there may be restraints in UNDP's contribution.

In view of the overall breadth of the mission it is suggested that UNICEF consider favourably the possibility of supporting this mission, by meeting any reasonable shortfalls.

Other questions affecting certain aspects of the terms of reference of the mission are being pursued separately.

We would like to thank the various officials and our Colleagues in Kabul for their many courtesies and hospitality during our brief stay.